

Environment

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ing of Yowaka (household 2), an old woman who cannot walk because of a great sore on her leg but who makes up for that with her sharp tongue and loud voice. She is the widow of Yaramp, Wof's first cousin, and the mother of Mar (see household 3). With her lives Mar's betrothed, Yawa, a rather unattractive and lazy adolescent girl. [583]

Yowaka's son, Mar (household 3, family line 2), the owner of the third dwelling in this cluster of houses, is a tall gangling youth who has not adjusted very well to Kwoma society. He shows marked anxiety about expressing himself sexually and aggressively, and appears unable to measure up to the standards of behavior set by the culture with respect to these drives. With him live his adolescent sister Awa; two of his father's brother's children—Kwiya, an adolescent girl, and Fit, a boy of eight or nine; and Gwiyp, an adolescent nephew of Wof's.²⁰ Gwiyp, perhaps my best informant, is a lad just past puberty. He is not yet fully grown but is extremely intelligent, very active, and has learned to speak pidgin English fluently. [156] [602] [115] [191]

Just across the path from these three houses is that of Marok (household 7, family line 5). With him live his wife Dawi, his married sister U'ka,²¹ and his adopted daughter Afi, the real sister of Gwiyp. Marok is in his middle twenties. He is the only male of his age group in the hamlet who did not leave for a time to work for the whites. For this reason he is also the only one who speaks no pidgin English. [597] [564] [648] [191]

About fifty yards down the path from the houses of Wof and Marok is a dwelling shared by three brothers with their wives and children (household 4, family line 4). War, the oldest, a man in his thirties, is a cleanly built, thick set person with a somewhat cocky air. He has the highest status in the community, being renowned as a head-hunter, singer, [156] [554]

²⁰ It is unusual for an unmarried adolescent to be in charge of a household. This came about as a result of the death in rather quick succession of the fathers of Mar, of Fit, and of Gwiyp. Actually, Wof and Yowaka kept a sharp watch over the household. The three houses were near enough together so that they could do this quite effectively.

²¹ She is living with her brother while her husband is away on a three-year contract to work on a white man's plantation. [736]

[p. 31]

CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF WEANING

WEANING marks the end of the infancy period.¹ It is a gradual process for which the mother prepares the infant by substituting solid foods for milk and by coaxing the child to spend more and more time on the floor of the porch rather than sitting in her lap. When she eventually decides that he is mature enough, usually during the second or third year, she prevents further breast feeding. She chooses the time in accordance with the adequacy of her child rather than his chronological age, a sickly child being weaned later than a healthy one. Several informants stated that infants stop breast feeding of their own accord, but others said that the mother stops the flow of milk by daubing her nipples with the sap of the breadfruit tree, a thick, viscous fluid, which is used by the natives as glue. If the infant is very persistent in trying to continue to suck, the mother may tell him that a *marsalai*² has taken the place of her milk, sometimes emphasizing this story by placing a leech on her breast.

After he has been weaned, the child must learn to depend entirely on the diet of his parents. He becomes adept at drinking soup from coconut-shell bowls, learns to munch the sago briquettes which his mother has cooked for the family, and begins to eat meat with his sago just as his parents do. He also learns that he cannot eat whenever he is hungry, but

¹ Wof's stepson Kum supplied most information on this phase of the process of socialization. He was a bright lad between four and five years old. Merik, Way's son, was also in this period. He was an unhappy child of about Kum's age, who seemed to resent the birth of his younger brother Kadowan. [115] •

² *Marsalai* is the pidgin English term for a class of huge supernatural beings who dwell in the swamps surrounding the tribe. These monsters usually take the form of great snakes or crocodiles. The belief in these monsters is widespread both in New Guinea and in Australia (cf. M. Mead, "The Marsalai Cult among the Arapesh," *Oceania*, IV [1933], 37-53). [776] [771]

[p.38]

CHAPTER IV

CHILDHOOD

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WHEN the child¹ has relinquished his attempts to recapture the preferred habits of infancy, his mother gives him a little bag which she has netted for him and his father the betel-chewing accoutrements to go with it. They tell him that he has become a little man. He now turns to the play group and spends his time playing games with other children, roaming in the forest, and participating to some extent in adult activities. The sexes avoid each other from this time, the boys and the girls forming separate play groups.

824 The widening of a boy's contact with the environment
825 necessitates new discriminations about the edibility of things.
861 While playing in the forest he comes across luscious-looking
262 berries which may cause his death if he does not know that
[524] they are poisonous. Kwoma boys play a game in which they
kill lizards and snakes and cook and eat them in a playhouse²
in the jungle. Some of these reptiles are good to eat; others
are poisonous. The parents warn the child about the objects
that are poisonous. When I went for a walk with a native, he
would frequently point out some class of objects to be
avoided. Children were as likely to teach me as adults. Once
a little girl of eight was scathing in her comments about me
because I did not know that a certain berry was not good to
eat. Although I observed no specific example of an older sib-
ling using this technique on a younger one, I feel confident
that it occurred rather frequently. In any case, the training

• [15] ¹ Mey, Fit, Kwo, Gwamp, Ham, and Hamh—boys, and Af, Buka, Haya, Toka, Kayamaka, and Yawa—girls, constituted the personnel of the childhood age group of Rumbina hamlet. Mey, Fit, Kwo, and Ham spent much [23] of their time running in and out of my house and playing near by and therefore provided most of the observational data on the boys in this age group. Af and Buka, who lived in houses next to mine, provided most of the data on girls.

² A rough bough hut which children construct for play.

[p. 65]

CHAPTER V

ADOLESCENCE

ADOLESCENCE¹ begins for the Kwoma boy with his⁸⁸² initiation into the age-grade cycle, for the girl with^[881] a ceremony at the time of her first menstruation. Adolescence is a relatively short period, lasting from one to three years. It is a time of transition from the established habits of childhood to those of adulthood. The attainment of a maturing physique brings with it the necessity of learning to do many of the economic tasks which are not expected of a child, and the increase in the strength of the sex drive makes childhood sexual satisfactions no longer adequate, thus throwing the youth into new learning dilemmas. Next to the weaning period, adolescence is the most turbulent time in the life of a Kwoma individual, a period marked by the learning of many new habits and the facing of many new problems.

The rites which the Kwoma girl undergoes at the time of⁸⁸¹ her first menstruation are a strictly feminine affair. The men⁵⁶² know little about them, and do not pry. Male informants stated that, since men kept cult secrets from the women, it was only proper that the women should be permitted to keep their secrets from men. Women were silent about the rites.² For these reasons, I was only able to gather that the rite^[23] included a period of seclusion and that the initiates were given ornaments in which they paraded as a part of the ceremony.

A Kwoma boy is initiated into the age-grade cycle in an⁸⁸¹

¹ Gwiya⁸⁸¹ was the only adolescent boy of Rumbina hamlet. Mar was in a^[115] somewhat anomalous position between adolescence and adulthood. He had already received his keloids of manhood but was not yet married. Examples from his life have therefore been included both in this and the following chapter. There were five adolescent girls in the hamlet: Kwiya and Awa, in Mar's household; Gwanta and Famba, the daughters of Way; and Aya, the daughter of Waramus.

² Had it been possible to establish better rapport with women, more^[23] information concerning these rites and other aspects of female life could have been obtained.

[p.106]

CHAPTER VI
ADULTHOOD

884
304 A KWOMA boy becomes an adult¹ when he receives the keloids which are a symbol of manhood. The scarification ceremony² occurs when he has grown to full stature and is ready to marry.³ This initiation takes place at one of the house tamberans where all the boys of the proper age are operated on at a single ceremony. Each boy, when his turn comes, lies on a sago spathe. While the father of his [606] future wife holds his hands, a special operator incises two semicircular cuts above each nipple and rubs ashes into them [608] to make a raised scar. All boys who are cut on the same spathe become *fricuds*, a relationship established by the mixture of their blood which it is believed makes them "one blood" like brothers.

[608] A girl enters adulthood in a slightly different and less public manner. She also is cut with other girls of her age, to each of whom she becomes a *friend*; but the operation takes place at the dwelling of the operator, instead of the house tamberan, and the design of her keloid is an elaborate circular figure centered about the navel. I do not know who holds her hands during the operation.

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593 By the time a Kwoma man has become adult, he has learned most of the techniques of food getting. Even as an adolescent he has assumed considerable responsibility for producing food. As an adult his economic duties are even more insistently sanctioned. An adolescent need only contribute to the support of his father's family, but an adult must produce

• [115] ¹ The adults of Rumbuna hamlet whose behavior was most closely observed were Wof, Marok, War, Kar, Kis, Yat, Way, Waramus, and Mes. Kar, Kis, Yat, and Mes, since they spoke pidgin English, were my best informants on this period. (See household map and lineage chart in chap. I.)

² This ceremony should not be confused with either the age-grade or cult initiation ceremonies which occur during adolescence.

[582] ³ In the majority of cases, a boy marries shortly after the scars are healed, so his wedding also corresponds with his entry into adulthood.

1: Whitting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941

OJ13 Kwoma OJ13

[p. 168-H]

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• 115



Gwiyap, our best informant, wearing a laplap which he had earned working for us as a house boy. See Chapter V.

2: Whiting

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OJ13 Kwomá OJ13

[For additional information about informants, see category 116, pp. 140-170.]

124 evidence that it formerly existed; marriage--matrilocal, with gift of shells from boy's family to girl's; residence after marriage--patrilocal; and enough on language to enable us to understand vaguely what the old men are saying as they sit around the fire.

● 115

[648]

Yesterday, a Mr. Eve came to Waskuk. He is a surveyor for "Gil Search" Ltd. and has been all through the country between the Sepik and the Dutch border except for one little corner. Most of this country hasn't been traversed by anyone but him, and we spent a most interesting afternoon with him. He has made incidental anthropological notes as he passed through - such as house form, village arrangement and size, clothing, etc. He has all the names of the native villages in this area that he has seen (I guess he had not missed many), and he is going to let us make a rough copy of it this afternoon, and tell us what he knows about the villages at the same time. I should say that we were very much in luck to meet such a man. He had a lot to say about Thurwald and admired his work very much. He said that he didn't get half the credit he deserved for his pioneering work. For instance, Champion and Karius only had to go eight miles (just over the limestone barrier) from the headwaters of the Fly to connect up with Thurwald's work of years before, but they do not mention this. Another interesting thing that he has run across is a tribe in the interior which has a whistling language. Luckily he has two work boys from this place with him now, and I am going to see if I can get anything from them on their language and their tribe this afternoon while Tip works on the map.

DECEMBER 1. Mr. Eve stayed here three days and lived up to expectation. Tip made a copy of the map and got quite a few notes on the tribes that Eve had visited...enough to give a rough idea of where to go to future field workers. Had we met him before we settled here, I think we could

- 115 have made a better choice. I got some texts on the whistling language. It is a surprisingly well developed form of communication and as far as I can tell, independent of their spoken language. It consists of different combinations of three factors,--two tones and a stop. These can be spoken or shouted with a high tone, a low tone, and the glottal stop. It can be whistled, or, for very long distances, blown through a large open whistle of bamboo.

One of the most interesting things that Eve told us was evidences of Malay bird of paradise hunters in the area roughly west of a line drawn from here northward to the coast, and extending to the Dutch border. This is evidenced by the fact that the natives would come out and pantomime shooting a gun and using a ramrod, and would jabber to him a few words of Malay Pidgin. He checked up on its being Malay Pidgin by looking it up when on leave and learning enough so he was able to answer them on his next trip in. Another thing of interest is a homogeneous culture area about eight days march south of Aitape--very thickly populated, about eight-hundred to the village, very friendly, with food aplenty, and as yet untouched by recruiters, etc.

- 126 After Eve left, we worked on revising our phonemes. Our first rough attempt was not satisfactory. The one we have now is better, but still far from perfect. We also went over all the words we had collected, revised them and arranged them alphabetically in a loose leaf dictionary. We find that we have about four-hundred -- not enough, and a particular paucity of verbs
- [124] which are rather hard to get at. It is difficult to get texts because the
- [123] myths are supposedly esoteric and only recently have people been willing to
- [196] tell us any. From this dictionary we have made, several interesting word configurations and a promise of more have appeared - for instance sugilewas

It turned out the next

787 morning that the wife of Mar (Wof's adopted son and one of our houseboys) had become possessed by a spirit which was talking through her. The words she spoke were unintelligible this time, but often they can be understood.

[789] Such possession is used to detect thieves. The voices heard were Wof exercising this ghost. The general opinion was that the ghost was angry at him and so he remained in his house and shouted at the possessed woman in the next house to frighten the ghost away. He evidently was successful, for there were no dire effects. We got the account from the kids, so it is not very clear, but it gives us a lead. According to them only two or three persons in each sib can be possessed, and these are of either sex. What it means beyond this we don't know as yet.

114 December 3, 1936. It was a bright cool day today,; the temperature at dawn
[132] was 68 which is the lowest we have observed. This change buoyed up our
124 spirits considerably, and they were even more raised when Marok, who is probably the most respected of the older men of the tribe, and a person of striking dignity, came to pay us a visit. He had come around previously when we were working on kinship. We asked him who his father and mother, etc. were. He told us, but immediately asked us the same questions. When
[123] we told him, he repeated them over very interestedly, thus putting us all on an equal footing.

614 Today we started by asking him (Marok) what sugilawas meant, and
769 found out that there were four belonging to his sib (Sombundura). Long
[532] ago, each was an important man, and each is represented by a different mask which is exhibited in the house tambaran at the time of a ceremony. This suggested to him a list of plants and animals which 'belonged' to his sib: pig, gouria pigeon, cassowary, an edible leaf, and the large yam. These
are the ones very connected with their original ancestors. "They come up

Cooking and Food Preparation

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Mema

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Informant: Oriyap:

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10 o'clock-- 1 boiled sago

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1 o'clock-- 2 boiled sago

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1 cup soup (low food)

Informant: Oriyap

dawn-- 1 ripe banana

7:30 a.m.-- one-third breadfruit

1 boiled sago

noon-- 3 ripe bananas

3:00 p.m. 2 boiled sago

Informant: May

dawn-- 1 boiled sago

3:00 p.m.-- 3 dishes soup (lofu, sago)

Informant: Ava

niling

(breakfast)-- 1 - 3 boiled sago

yentek

(lunch)-- 1 - 3 boiled sago

1 - 3 dishes soup (served in half coconut shell)

meat (fish, snake, lizard, pig or bird)

hongo

(dinner)-- 1 boiled sago

252 Informant: May

264 7:00 a.m.-- 1 boiled sage

115 10:00 a.m.-- one-third breadfruit

262 noon-- a little pigeon meat

2:00 p.m.-- 2 boiled sage

1 cup yam soup

3:00 p.m.-- 2 boiled sage

6:00 p.m.-- a bit of gouria pigeon.

Informant: Mar

7:00 a.m.-- 2 boiled sage

2:00 p.m.-- 2 boiled sage

3 cups soup (meat)

night-- 6 boiled sage

Appendix 3

INFORMANTS AND INDIVIDUALS OF KUMBINA HAMLET

Note: The people of Kumbina Hamlet are indicated with respect to household, relations, kin, and age on pages 11, 13, and 17 of Becoming a Kwoma by John W. M. Whiting. Following is an alphabetically organized list of the names of these people along with some people from other hamlets who appear frequently in the text. A few characters who only appear once in the text are not included in this list. Sex is indicated by capitalizing the names of the males.

Name	Age	Lineage
AFALOMARI	adult	Other. Wood carver.
Afi	8	Mangviyow
AFOK	30	Wasahof
Ambe	adult	Mangviyow
ANGADIN	4	Wasahof
ANGENAR	1	Wasahof
ASAMANTA	adult	Other.
Awa	13	Mangviyow
Aya	16	Wasahof
Bora	adult	Mangviyow
Buka	10	Mangviyow
Chinawa	adult	Mangviyow
DAV, DAMANGI	36	Wasahof
Davi	adult	Mangviyow
Difa	adult	Mangviyow
EVE	adult	A British oil search engineer.
Famba	child	Mangviyow
FIT	10	Mangviyow
FOKOTAY	35	Wasahof
Gaga	adult	Mangviyow
Gufo	adult	Wasahof
GMAMP	6	Mangviyow
Qwanta	13	Mangviyow
QWT/AP	13	Mangviyow
HAMB	7	Mangviyow
Haya	7	Mangviyow
Hurena	adult	Wasahof
KADOMAR	6 mos.	Mangviyow
Kafa	adult	Mangviyow
KAR	27	Mangviyow
KAWAP	2	Wasahof
Kaya	adult	Mangviyow
Kayamka	7	Wasahof
KEMARI	adult	Other
KIS	28	Mangviyow
KOPB	adult	Other
KUN	4	Mangviyow
Kuma	adult	Mangviyow
KHALUNG	34	Wasahof
Kriya	13	Mangviyow
KROMAI	adult	Other. Good hunter.
KROMAYI	young adult	Other. Had worked in gold fields. Spoke pidgin.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Lineage</u>
115	KWOS	8	Vasahof
621	LATAI	adult	Other. Good hunter.
162	Masa	12	Mangviyow
551	MAMO	24	Mangviyow
613	MAR	18	Mangviyow
	MAROK	23	Mangviyow
	Mwiaswari	adult	Mangviyow
	MERIK	5	Mangviyow
	MES	18	Vasahof
	MEY	12	Mangviyow
	MUTSI	Old man of Hongwan - suspected of being a sorcerer.	
	MUNDIK	young adult	Other
	Masingamp	adult	Other. Of the coast. Wife of Nambomai.
	NAMBOMAI	adult	Other. Of the coast. Houseboy.
	Nasa	adult	Vasahof
	NAMABANEN	adult	Other. Thought to be a sorcerer.
	Ngviye	adult	Vasahof
	NJAN	6 mos.	Mangviyow
	DOB OVERALL	adult	Recruiter
	Pasha	17	Mangviyow
	PWISAMBI	adult	Other
	SOF	adult	Other
	SOVINAMBI	adult	Other. Cicatrizer
	SUKATAYA	adult	Other. Good hunter.
	Sunga	adult	Mangviyow
	SUN	3	Mangviyow
	TAKAMUR	38	Mangviyow
	Toka	6	Mangviyow
	Uka	24	Mangviyow
	WAR	34	Mangviyow
	WARAMUS	30	Vasahof
	WAY	46	Mangviyow
	WERYANOKI	old man	Other
	WINGAMI	adult	Other
	WISEP	young adult	Other. From the coast. Houseboy.
	WIYANGANC	adult	Other. Cicatrizer.
	WOF	43	Mangviyow
	Yasa	adult	Mangviyow
	YAT	32	Mangviyow
	Yawa	15	Vasahof
	Yavaka	5	Vasahof
	Yimba	18 mos.	Mangviyow